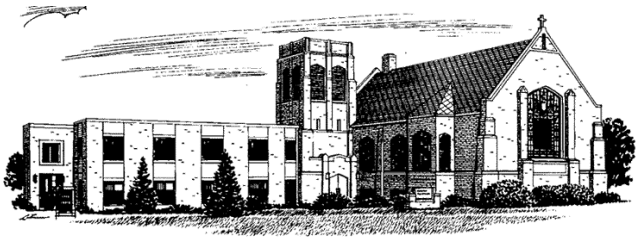


SARON NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook: www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: *oleson@saronlutheran.org*

Marcus Roll, Senior Choir Director,
Bell Choir Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Margaret Froehlich, Administrative Assistant
Megan Savage Financial Secretary
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

Sundays at Saron:
During the School Year:
8:30 & 11:00 A.M. Worship
Childcare provided
9:40 Learning for Ages 2 – Adult

Summers (thru Labor Day weekend):
9:30 Holy Communion
Childcare provided
No Learning Hour

All are welcome!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Rev. Whayne Hougland, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

Saron's Mission:
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!

December 2019

On December 1 we begin the season of Advent, a time of waiting. It is a season of preparation as we look forward to the celebration of Christ's birth. At Saron we have several opportunities to help in our waiting and preparation. Please join me as we look to the One who comes in a manger and whose presence is with us today and always.

Pastor Joan

Advent Mid-Week
"God Is In the Manger"
with the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer
Soup Supper at 6:00 pm
Worship at 7:00 pm
+
December 4 - Waiting
December 11 - Mystery
Followed by Hanging of the Greens
(church decorating)
December 18 - Redemption
Followed by Singing of Christmas Carols

YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
Signs of Christmas
Sunday, December 15; 11:00 am
(Regular Worship at 8:30 am)

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP
Tuesday, December 24; 7:00 & 10:00 pm
Candlelight and Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP
Wednesday, December 25; 9:30 am
Holy Communion

Caring and Sharing

In Our Prayers –

We remember in our thoughts and prayers: **Arla Huelsberg** is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center, St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace; **Virginia Anserello** is at Pine Ridge, Stevensville.

Office Hours at Saron

Margaret (secretary): Mon-Tues, 9 AM - 1 PM
Weds of Newsletter Week, 9 AM - 1 PM
Volunteers: Weds, 9:30 AM - 11 AM+
Financial Secretary: Megan Savage
Call the office for more information.
When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (983.1273) or contacting the president of the congregation.
Note: E-mails meant for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org. E-mails to Margaret and the church office should be addressed to info@saronlutheran.org.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members in December 2019.

Dec. 2 - Victor Coar
Jason Crockett
Dec. 4 - Phil Standen
Dec. 5 - Alexander Breyen
Dec. 7 - Dana Riley
Lorraine Mikesell
Adam Maly
Dec. 8 - Lee Carter
Dec. 9 – Janet Taylor
Piper Gray-Roll
Dec. 11 - Robert Deaton
Dec. 12 - Cynthia Brown
Edward Brunner
Gloria Hopkins
Dec. 13 - Eric Standen
Deborah Standen
Dec. 14 - Finnegan Gray-Roll
Dec. 16 – Charles Pater
Caden Zwar
Dec. 18 - Heather Pudell
Dec. 24 - Bernice Koski (94 years)
Dec. 27 - Oliver Fortenbacher
Dec. 30 - Madison Dipert
Dec. 31 - Kristen Harper

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members in December 2019.

Dec. 18 – Dennis and Colleen Lundgren
Dec. 26 – Brian and Marybeth Culverhouse
Dec. 30 - Mark and Judy Wedde

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round"

If there is anyone who has been omitted, or, if the dates are incorrect from the birthday and anniversary list, please call the church office at 983-1273. Thank you.

ANNUAL MEETING

Set aside Sunday, January 26, for Saron's annual meeting. Immediately after our 2nd worship on that day we will have a potluck dinner, followed by the meeting at 1:00 PM. All voting members are encouraged to attend. Guests are welcome.

Welcome Emmie Carter

Welcome and God's blessings to Emmie Laurine Carter, daughter of Kyle and Claire Carter. Emmie was born October 30, 2019.

PARKING

During the cold and wintry months, please consider leaving the parking spaces closest to Saron for those who find it most difficult to navigate the snow and ice. This, even as we try to have our walks and parking spaces clear! Thanks!

WELCOME!

We welcome Emily Gaul, Ted Hovick, Terry, Steve, and John Leyerle, who joined the Saron community on November 17.

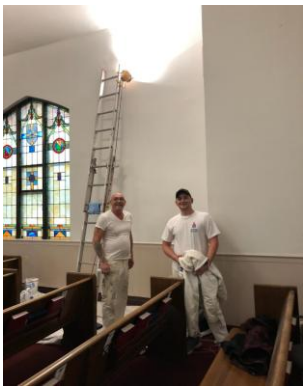
PRAYER GROUP

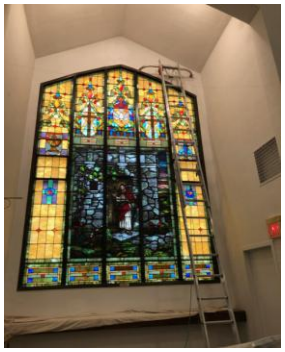
Join us on Mondays at 11:00 a.m. for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship. We meet in the sanctuary.

FORTIFY & fly

Progress can be difficult to measure. Sometimes a new purchase or enhancement sticks out as super obvious but other times, what we've spent time and money on is almost invisible. In the case of November, part of our progress was literally making something disappear. After years of leaks, water damage and temporary patches, those areas in the sanctuary are near completion and finished off with fresh paint. Soon, there will nothing left to look at. Hooray for glorious blankness!

As of the end of October, we had collected $189,967 towards our 3 year pledge total of $371,165. As the new commitment forms continue to roll in, we'll get a better idea of what to expect for Fortify & Fly collections in 2020. Thank you for your continued support and for being with us on this journey!





Worship

FACEBOOK & WORSHIP VIDEO

We love to share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

Sunday, Dec. 1 –
First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 2:1-5
Psalm 122
Romans 13:11-14
Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday, Dec. 8 –
Second Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, Dec. 15 –
Third Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, Dec. 22 –
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Sunday, Dec. 29 –
First Sunday of Christmas
Isaiah 62:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

Nursery News

We are always looking for more volunteers to keep this service available. Recently we have had a couple of people that had to step away, so if we have someone join in, we keep our rotation time the same. You can choose either worship time.

Our child care provider Emily is great at playing with the children but we do need a second person in the room. Getting to know our little ones can be a fun experience And we can and do work with a variety of schedules. Please let Marilyn Lucy, Krin Jurgensen, or Pastor Oleson know you are interested.

POINSETTIA PLANTS

You are invited to purchase a poinsettia that will help Beautify Saron's chancel at Christmas. You may pick up your plant(s) after the Christmas Eve service December 24th. **ORDER DEADLINE IS WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13th.** Call the church office for more details or pick up an order form in the Sunday bulletin.

2020 FLOWER CALENDAR

The 2020 flower calendar is here and is posted .
Cost: $25.00/vase. This is an opportunity for you to give flowers in honor or memory of someone. The church orders the flowers (unless you indicate otherwise) and you can take the flowers home after 2nd service.

Youth

Are you in grades 6-12? Please join us for youth group activities! The next gathering is on December 15, after the second service. For more info, contact Scott at *scottgaspari@outlook.com or (Cell) 847-373-8825.*

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR NEWS

There are learning groups for ages 3-adult on Sundays at 9:40. This includes younger youth, confirmation aged youth (gr. 6-8), high school youth, and adults. The adult forum continues their series on St. Augustine's Confessions, a series from Great Courses. Newcomers are always welcome.

Men's monthly Bible Devotions and Breakfast

There will be Men's Bible Devotions/Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. December 7th, at the Galley Grill.

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study

Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study Men's Bible Study will not be meeting during Advent but we encourage everyone to participate in the Wednesday evening suppers and worship. Therefore our last Tuesday Bible study before Advent will be November 19. We'll resume our studies on Tuesday, January 7, 2020. For more information call Bob Kynast at 269-921-2786 or Don Hafer at 269-985-3637. Saron's Tuesday Evening Men's Bible Study meets at 6:00pm at the church. At 7:00pm we adjourn for a time of fellowship. All men are invited to join us. As the Bible says "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

THURSDAY MORNING STUDY

Join us in January for a new study. We will not meet in December.

EPHESUS STUDY GROUP

Watch for more news or contact the Kynast's or Hafer's for more information.

1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Start December off with us at 6:30, December 1st, in the upstairs lounge. We are discussing "Once Upon a River", by Diane Setterfield. She is a master storyteller and leads readers through a tale with interesting twists and turns and just a bit of magic, too. Three families share in this tale. A lost child is rescued from the river. Is she the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy family? Is she the illegitimate daughter of a farmer's son. Is she the local parson's housekeeper's lost sister? Set in the 1800's in a pub along the River Thames outside of London, this story will transport you through worlds real and imagined and make it seem possible. This is a bit of a different choice for our group, so come be challenged.

We skip the month of January and meet again on February 9, 2020. The book on the table will be "Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI", by David Grann. More about this wildly interesting selection in the Janurary newsletter.

If you love to read, we would love to have you join us. All are welcome. Questions? Contact Kathy Cowall (269-428-0354) or kcowall@hotmail.com.
"I am too fond of reading books to care to write them." (Oscar Wilde)

Women of the ELCA.

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will **not** meet in December. January 8th 2020, is the date for the Christmas Party at the home of Linda Pater.

SARON CHURCH WOMEN BAKE SALE

Saron Church Women will be having a bake sale in the church narthex on Sunday, December 8th. All of the proceeds will go to the Saron Mentor Family Fund. Please bring a baked item or items and, hopefully, make a purchase. It is extremely helpful if you label your donation and note any allergens. This would be a good time to make Christmas treats. We will continue to collect monetary donations on the following Sunday, December 15. Thank you in advance for your support. It is very much appreciated. Contributions to the Mentor Family Fund are accepted throughout the year.

Hospitality

Sign Up for Refreshments

Please consider signing up for refreshments to be served after worship on Sundays. There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex bulletin board.

FROM THE HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE

The Advent Season will begin immediately after Thanksgiving this year and will consist only of 3 mid-week soup supper/devotional evenings. A sign-up sheet has been posted on the kiosk in the Narthex for volunteers to bring soup, salad, rolls and dessert for each Wednesday evening of the Advent season: December 4, December 11 and December 18, 2019. The meal begins at 6:00 PM but volunteers usually arrive by 5:15 PM to set tables and prepare the buffet line. We would love to see some new names on the list and families with children are always welcome! The true spirit of Christmas is felt when we socialize as a congregation and prepare the church for the celebration of the birth of Christ!

Karen Johnson and Deanna Deaton

Support

A Special Message for Travelers and Those Who Prefer Electronic Giving

Saron offers the option to give electronically for your convenience. Please contact the church office if you have any questions or to enroll. Thanks.

Saron Endowment Fund Update

Saron member Kathi Anserello is a special education teacher at Blossomland Learning Center, working with children who have issues with speech. The Saron Endowment Fund awarded $1738 dollars for three iPads with specialized software that helps these students learn how to speak. The following are Kathi's comments about the impact of these devices:

"Communication is such a basic part of everyday life. Consider how it connects everyone in daily routines. It is easy to take for granted the ability to speak whenever, wherever, and to whomever one chooses. Not everyone has that opportunity. For someone diagnosed with a severe communication impairment, a dynamic augmentative alternative communication (AAC) device with a robust vocabulary allows him or her to have a life that is blended with that of family and community. Having worked with students for over 30 years, I have witnessed technology evolve to open so many doors.

The iPads and the TouchChatHD apps that were so generously provided by Saron have allowed students, who were unintelligible or limited to speaking a few words at a time, to express their thoughts and feelings rather than crying, acting out in frustration when not understood, or just giving up. They take pride in their words and proudly use the iPads everywhere in school. Now, thanks to Saron, they will have their words heard wherever they go in the community.

On the back of each iPad their name is inscribed with "your words have power".

We (students, families, teachers, and myself) are forever grateful for that power!"

Endowment Committee

Endowment Committee Chairperson Marilyn Frey, Endowment Treasurer Dennis Lundgren and Pastor Joan presented Reshella Allen-Hawkins, Director of Emergency Shelter Services with a check for $2,000 to help defray the costs of operations for the shelter. In her thank you letter she said "The Emergency Shelter relies on the generosity of donors such as grateful for your support."

Emergency Shelter Services is a nonprofit serving single women and women who with their children are homeless or experiencing housing instability. The various ESS programs help these residents of Berrien County get back on their feet, creating hope for a better future. The shelter typically houses over 25 women and children on any given day.

Clients stay an average of 39 days and nearly 2/3 of the clients are children. Shelter services include connecting clients with supportive housing, case management and rental assistance. Emergency Shelter Services also operates a second hand store with income from the store helping to defray some of the operating cost of ESS.

The gift is in keeping with our practice of using a percentage of the Endowment Fund income to make a difference in our community.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, e-mail Matt Bradley to receive the account number for which the shares will be transferred to. Once the transaction has been completed, e-mail Matt Bradley the name of the stock, the number of shares, and the date of the transfer. This allows the transaction to be completed and ensures it is included on your giving statement. Thanks! Matt Bradley, treasurer

Outreach

November's Mission Moment - HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Following seven weeks of discussion on the topic of the subject of the refugee crisis, those who participated in the discussions decided they wanted to begin "doing something" about making things better for refugees. We discovered that Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) has a project – HOPE FOR THE HOLIDAYS -- that would give us an opportunity to do just that while continuing to learn even more about this subject.

Here's how the project works – LIRS is encouraging congregations to write messages of hope for refugees and immigrants who are living in three detention centers in the US. Two of the centers are in Texas, and the third is in Maryland. We are to write messages of hope and encouragement in English and Spanish on holiday cards. A supply of cards is available on a table in the Narthex for this purpose. Feel free to draw a picture, share a favorite Bible verse or quote to personalize the card. You could also use stickers or do your own stamping, etc. We also have copies of some sample greetings that could be used, and these are available in both English and Spanish. Sign your name (first names only), and write "from St. Joseph, Michigan" on the card. We are not to put the cards in individual envelopes; instead, we will put all of the cards in a large envelope and mail them to a designated partner Lutheran Church in Baltimore, Maryland. You can write your cards while you're at the church, or you can take cards home to write them, but all cards need to be completed and at Saron no later than December 1. LIRS will ensure that every family in detention receives a card and a gift to open on Christmas morning.

As we approach the holiday season, think what it must be like to be staying in one of the detention centers with all the uncertainty that surrounds life for those people. And please join us in sending messages of hope and encouragement to these people. Thank you for participating!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

A task force at Saron has been looking at issues of welcome and inclusivity and how to best live into our mission of "joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!"

As noted in last month's article from Pastor Joan, the task force is working toward the possibility of Saron becoming a Reconciling In Christ congregation, that is a congregation intentional in its welcome of those in the LGBTQIA+ community. During the months ahead we will be offering opportunities and resources that will help open our hearts and minds to what that means. This month's clunky question is: *"LGBTQIA" Why do you need a label for everything?* You can see the video clip that addresses that question at https://youtu.be/WpQK2U7ci2g
We also have available at Saron's kiosk a resource entitled *Lutheran Introduction to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, & Gender Expression.* It offers a basic introduction to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Serving on the task force are Kati and Nick Hooper, Laurel Gacek, Laura Hicks, Darlene Kiessel and Pastor. Contact any of these folks if you would like to know more or be part of the conversation.

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

On October 24th 138 people gathered at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen to enjoy a ham & rice dinner prepared & served by members of Saron. The meal was prepared by Mary Alice Brunner, Ruth Ball, Pastor Joan, Coanne Hohman, Sue Harris, Kathy Cowall, & Marie Wester. Saron's cookies are always enjoyed by all & were baked this month by Pat Breyen, Judi Huff, & Kris Weber. Thank to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, & prayers.

Large cans of fruit are always needed at the Soup Kitchen & can be dropped off anytime at the church. Any questions or to volunteer or provide cookies please contact Kathie Bradley at 427-7083.

ELCA GOOD GIFTS

It is time to start thinking about Christmas! When you are thinking of the perfect gift for a family member or friend, consider purchasing an ELCA GOOD GIFT ornament. You will have the opportunity to support the ELCA GOOD GIFTS campaign by selecting an ornament from the Christmas tree in Saron's narthex. There will be a variety of ornaments to chose from, prices ranging from $10.00-$500.00. The back of each ornament may be personalized. Checks may be made out to Saron, with ELCA GOOD GIFTS on the MEMO line. God's Work. Our Hands.

Thank you, Outreach

Santa Lucia Celebration

All are invited to a Santa Lucia Celebration hosted by the Joe Harbor Vasa Lodge on Sunday December 15, 2019, at 3:00 pm. A Swedish tradition, the day is often observed with the eldest daughter dressed in a long white gown with a red sash and a crown with candles serving coffee and buns as the song Santa Lucia is sung. The Vasa celebration will include the story of St. Lucia, music, and the presentation of our Lucia. Refreshments will be served. The Joe Harbor Vasa Lodge is part of the Vasa Order of America and is dedicated to preserving and sharing Swedish and Nordic culture and heritage. The Joe Harbor Vasa Lodge, chartered in 1929, meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month, February through December, at Saron.

Facilities

CAN YOU VACUUM?

Our cleaning service attends to Saron's needs every other week. On the off-week, especially during the winter months, a vacuum of the sanctuary, narthex, and entry way is needed. Are you available and willing to do this? A sign-up sheet is available. Preferred vacuum times are between 8 pm on Thursday and Saturday evening. Thank you!

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

December 2019

We're on Facebook! Like us at
www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron 2019
December Volunteer Schedule

	December 1 First Sunday of Advent		December 8 Second Sunday of Advent		December 15 Third Sunday of Advent		December 22 Fourth Sunday ofAdvent		December 29 First Sunday of Christmas	
	8:30	**11:00**	**8:30**	**11:00**	**8:30**	**11:00**	**8:30**	**11:00**	**8:30**	**11:00**
Assisting minister	Wendy King	Connor Ashley	Eric Standen	Dennis Lundgren	Marilyn Frey	Youth Christmas program	Sue Rood	Colleen Lundgren	Pauline Ngonyani	Denise Cook
Reader/ Comm.Ass	Karen Hinckley	Mary Kynast	Steve Bell	Don Hafer	Sally Schmuhl	Youth	Jim Manore	Laurel Gacek	Sue Rood	Matt Bradley
Ushers	Walt & Sally Schmuhl	Darlene Kiessel & Krin Jurgensen	Jim Manore & Deb Standen	Bob &Mary Kynast	Fran Richards & Elizabeth Kunkel	Scott and Lindsay Gaspari	Dave & Sue Bailey	David & Michelle Young	Eric & Deb Standen	John Olson & Laura Kroening
Acolyte	Eric Burrow	Meredith Gacek & Addison Osgood	Brooke Henderson	Mia and Alaina Bradley		Molly Becker	Brooke Henderson	Grant Gacek & Ava Osgood		Mia & Alaina Bradley
Nursery 1st	Deb Standen	Judi Huff	Mary Alice Brunner	Marilyn and Lindsay	Deb Standen	Frieda Williams	Jenna Henderson	Kate Kohs	Allison Rood	Mary Kynast
Nursery 2nd	Marilyn Lucy	Marilyn Lucy	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul	Emily Gaul
Bldg. close		Jerry and Ruth Stelling		Bob &Mary Kynast		Bob Hopkins		Brad and Marilyn Frey		Jerry and Ruth Stelling
Snacks						Learning Committee				
Flowers	Cradle Candle Pat Breyen				Dennis & Colleen Lundgren				Poinsettias	

December 24 Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m.
Acolytes: Mia & Alaina Bradley

10:00 p.m.
Acolytes: Meredith & Grant Gacek

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship & Learning 6:30 p.m. 1ST Sunday Book Discussion Group	**2** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group	**3**	**4** *Pastor back from vacation* 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship	**5** 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	**6**	**7** 9:00 a.m. Men's Devotion/Breakfast at the Galley Grill
8 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship & Learning SCW Bake Sale	**9** 11:00 a.m. Prayer 6:00 p.m. Support 6 -8pm Children's Christmas Practice *Newsletter Articles due*	**10**	**11** 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship	**12** 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	**13**	14
15 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship & Learning 11:00 a.m. Youth Christmas Program 3:00 pm Santa Lucia Celebration	**16** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group 7:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting	**17** 4:00 p.m.Vasa	**18** 9:30 a.m. Golden Hammers 6:00 p.m. Soup Supper 7:00 p.m. Worship	**19** 6:00 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal	**20**	21
22 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship & Learning	**23** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group	**24** Christmas Eve 7:00 p.m. & 10:00 p.m. Holy Communion & Candlelight	**25** 9:30 a.m. Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion	**26**	**27**	28
29 8:30 & 11:00 a.m. Worship & Learning	**30** 11:00 a.m. Prayer Group	**31**				